



Tapestry Topics

A Quarterly Review of Tapestry Art Today

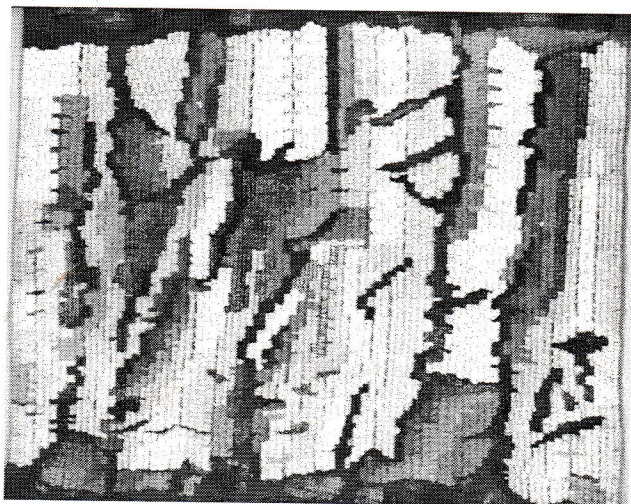
www.american Tapestry alliance.org

Fall 2007 Vol 33 No 3

*Celebrating
25 Years
1982-2007*

Diminishing Distances In This Issue

Tapestry Books	2
By Louise Abbott	
Review of <i>Tapestry 101</i>	5
By Pat Williams	
The Tapestry List	7
By Lany Eila	
Teaching Tapestry in North America	9
By Archie Brennan	
After 20 Years, Reflections on Teaching	10
By Susan Martin Maffei	
Diminishing Distances by Joining Together	12
By Tommye Scanlin	
Domaine de la lice	14
By Marika Szaraz	
Distance Learning Participants	15
Juanita Crowson, Cheryl Holbert, Ronda Karliukson, Bill Saunders	
ATB6 Artist:	17
By Cecilia Blomberg	
ATB6 Artist:	19
By Andrea Butler	
ATA Award to Sharon Warren	21
ATA's 2008 Educational Retreat	22
Member News	22



Linda Wallace, "Enigma." 10" x 10", 2006.
Having seen an exhibit of work by Sue Lawty, I started visiting her blog site frequently. Through that connection, I began looking at structure as something worth celebrating rather than merely an obstacle as I highlighted imagery.

Letter from the Co-directors

Tapestry is a complex medium. Although it is deceptively simple, we spend our lives striving to perfect our technical and design skills. We are forever learning from one another as we study tapestries in exhibitions, take workshops, listen to lectures and meet to discuss our chosen medium. The isolation we sometimes feel in our studios is beautifully balanced by the connections and friendships we make with other weavers.

ATA's recent Silver Anniversary Celebration provided an opportunity to immerse ourselves in tapestry talk with friends and strangers whose language we immediately understood. In San Jose old friendships were renewed and new ones initiated. We viewed the ATB6 exhibition and listened to the speakers and panel members give insight into the history of ATA and contemporary tapestry. Our founder Jim Brown referred to us as his "tapestry family." Jim charmed us with his

continued...

gracious manner and his visions for the future of both our organization and medium. Among those attending were all past presidents and co directors of ATA. Together we applauded the success of ATA's fundraiser, a drawing for Barbara Heller's tapestry "Nova Scotia Morning."

Networking continued on the following day with studio tours in the San Francisco Bay area. The Larochettes, Christine Laffer, Jan Moore, and Tricia Goldberg generously opened their homes and studios to our curious eyes. Seeing how they each set up their looms, yarn storage and work-space was fascinating. We were joined on the tour by the Chavez family of Zapotec weavers from Zacatecas, Mexico.

We were fortunate to have the Gloria F. Ross Center's annual lecture held in conjunction with the ATA events at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles. Dr. Alice Zrebic spoke eloquently about early tapestry studios in North America. Our thanks to Ann Hedlund, GFR Director, for arranging this opportunity and our congratulations to the GFR Board on their tenth anniversary.

The American Tapestry Alliance was created to form a network of tapestry artists and to facilitate opportunities for us to exhibit our work, to teach and learn, and to alleviate the feeling of isolation. This work is also done in regional groups, in small study groups and through Internet tapestry lists. As a result of the morning networking session at the Silver Anniversary Celebration, we are delighted to announce the formation of a new regional group, Desert Tapestry Weavers.

Tapestry weavers seem to share a unique bond with one another. We form friendships with no geographical boundaries, and we help one another with a spirit of generosity. We are a community, we are a family.

Becky Stevens
Member Services

Linda Wallace
Resources

Doreen Trudell, Raffle Winner

Barbara Heller introduced me to tapestry. Although I have been a fabric and rug weaver for 30 years, I took my first tapestry workshop at Barbara's studio on Granville Island in Vancouver almost ten years ago. The lovely tapestry has returned home. We no longer live in Canada, but we are 50 yards south of the border in Washington. I am a member of ATA and weave tapestry almost exclusively. I was away during the raffle but returned home to a delightful surprise.

Next Issue: In a Wider Circle

Deadline: October 1st. The next issue will feature artists who have developed individualistic styles, or made specific contributions not covered in our previous anniversary issues. We welcome suggestions and articles about people you consider to have made such contributions and specific events that changed or opened up new channels for a segment of our ranks.

A report by Marti Fleischer that was intended for the summer "Then and Now" issue was inadvertently lost in Cyber Space. It will be posted as part of this current online version with a large selection of Silver Anniversary Celebration photos. Be sure to take a look at the article and images.

For this issue, we decided to ask members to contribute images that deal with idea of connections and spanning distances. They are spaced throughout the articles. Thank you to our contributors: Nicki Bair, Larissa Senatorova, Kathy Perkins, and Linda Wallace.

Tapestry Books

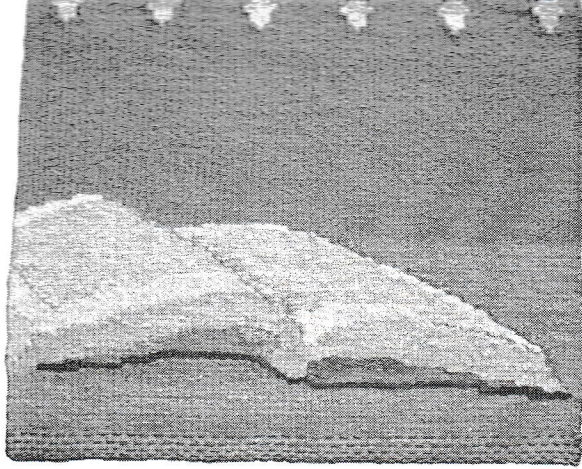
By Louise Abbott

Tapestry weaving is now enjoying a revival, and with it there are new and wonderful resources for both the experienced and the beginning weaver. We are in the Information Age with computers and instant information at our fingertips, but there is nothing like a book! Permit me to give you a brief overview of some of the textile and tapestry books I have found useful over the years. This is by no means an exhaustive list, as I know you will find many additional resources to support your tapestry weaving knowledge and development.

I have divided the subject into three categories: instructional, inspirational, and historical, with a brief outline of the books in each category.

Instructional

Kathe Todd-Hooker has just released *Tapestry 101*, her third book in a series on Tapestry instruction. This book gives the basics of beginning tapestry weaving in a clear, easy to read format with lots of photos and diagrams. It is inclusive of everything a person would need to learn to weave a tapestry, from choosing a loom and other equipment, to techniques, and cartoon design. Of special interest are the chapters on finishing, mounting and exhibiting a tapestry and a valuable chapter on Troubleshooting. In 2005, Kathe published, *Line in Tapestry*, which approaches line as a multi-purpose



Linda Rees. "Words in Flight," 10" x 13", 2001 while sketching an opened book, I saw an interesting wing shape and liked the thought of the content moving beyond the pages to the reader. Photo by Ellen Rees

design element and explores the subject in depth. The layout of the book lends itself to simplified instruction with lots of visual aids. The section on "Tricks, Treasures and Other Stuff" and the Gallery Section add another dimension. In 2004, Kathe published, *Shaped Tapestry*. It is intended by the author to be a handbook for weaving shaped images and creating 3-D forms. It opens up the reader to the creative possibilities outside of the traditional tapestry format. There are many pictures and diagrams for the reader to study.

In summary, I would encourage any serious tapestry weaver to include Kathe Todd-Hooker's books in your library. All Kathe's books are spiral bound making them easy to handle, and they are very easy to read. The books are cleverly written with lots of additional information and historic references, which she has obviously researched. Some overlapping of subjects occurs between the books, but this is not a distraction. Being a visual person, I found the author's use of pictures and clear, concise diagrams very helpful.

Nancy Harvey's book *Tapestry Weaving A Comprehensive Study Guide* was written in 1991. It is a wonderful offering to the beginning tapestry weaver and one of several books the author has written. The material is presented in a self-study format to aid the weaver in learning techniques as well as the steps involved in weaving a tapestry. The drawings and photographs are well done. Nancy includes a chapter on inspiration with color photos of works from successful tapestry artists. One of the author's goals is to encourage the weaver to explore

ment. It has been an important book in my reference library.

The Tapestry Handbook by **Carol K. Russell** was published in 1990. Carol's approach encourages the reader to weave a sampler of techniques from one chapter to another. The book's step-by-step photographs are clear and each chapter's "Tips and Advice" section is a great teaching tool. Of particular value is the examining of color in depth and, in the chapter on design, the discussion of how specific colors interact with individual techniques to produce a unique effect. Laced throughout the book are quotes from prominent artists in various media and a color portfolio from some of the finest tapestry artists. I have many "post-it" notes throughout this book from my frequent "pop-ins." The new edition, *The Tapestry Handbook: The Next Generation* is due to come out October 1, 2007.

An old stand-by, *Contemporary Tapestry*, by Harriet Tidball, was printed in 1964 as the twelfth Monograph in a series published by the Shuttle Craft Guild. When I began weaving in the 1970s, there was little in print to guide me on tapestry. This Monograph gives an excellent overview of tapestry looms and how they function that is still relevant today. Much of the Monograph elaborates on subject matter from workshops attended by Harriet and taught by Finnish weaver, Eve Anttila, an accomplished international tapestry weaver trained in the art schools of Finland and Paris. Many quality black and white photographs of weavings and drawings enhance the instruction. I found this Monograph very useful.

The Technique of Woven Tapestry by **Tadek Beutlich**, was published in 1967 and reprinted in 1979. While more recent books on tapestry weaving are far more inclusive, this book is a good reference for a specific artist's perspective. I especially liked the chapter on combining tapestry weave with plain weave, a design element that gives the weaver great freedom.

Weaving a Tapestry by **Laya Brostoff**, published in 1982, contains a lot of "meat" between its covers. Two chapters with a major focus on Design Concepts and Color Choice and Effects are well done. Also the chapters on the Cartoon and Color are very helpful. I have lots of "post-it" tabs throughout this book too.

Alec Pearson's, *The Complete Book of Tapestry Weaving*, was published in 1984. The highlight of this book is the many wonderful line illustrations, paintings and tapestries of the Scottish landscape created by the author with in-depth explanations of each one. Alec's

continued...

approach, tips and information are different from many of the previous books mentioned.

Deviating from the conventional tapestry process, **Theo Moorman** authored *WEAVING AS AN ART FORM: A Personal Statement*, published in 1975. The first chapter is an interesting history of her life and the times pre and post WWII in London. Chapter 2 and beyond elaborates on the "Moorman Technique" which is an adaptation of plain weave to create Tapestry-like woven effects in textile pieces frequently called Transparencies. Continuing chapters cover variations and uses of the technique, sources of inspiration for designs and many photos of completed works.

Instructional / Historical

Mexican Tapestry Weaving was written and illustrated by **Joanne Hall** and published in 1976. For anyone interested in the history of Mexican textiles, this book has a wealth of information. The author details Mexican tapestry techniques with historical references and translations and encourages the reader to weave a sampler to practice. Also included are many ancient Mexican designs and motifs in black and white. This book is well worth reading.

Christine Spangler's English translation of *Norwegian Tapestry Weaving* by **Maria Brekke Koppen** was published in 2006. It is a "how to" book on tapestry weaving with a European influence with French and Flemish tapestry techniques. "For many years the author taught tapestry at the State College for Art Teachers in Oslo. Her influence was a strong force in sustaining the revival of tapestry in Norway in the post-World War II period." There are many excellent illustrations of tapestry techniques and black and white photos displaying the woven results. It contains several precious color photos of actual woven artifacts from the Norwegian Folk Museum. This book is a treasure.

Inspirational

Helena Hernmarck: tapestry artist by **Monica Boman** and **Patricia Malarcher** in 1999, chronicles the life and art of this wonderful tapestry weaver. Helena developed a weaving style that became her signature, "free rosepath." She is a master of technique, adapting the rosepath weave structure to accommodate the very large tapestries she wove as commissions for architects and corporations. Her evolution as a professional weaver is a great story and a real inspiration.

NEZHNIIE: Weaver and Innovative Artist, by **Linda Rees**, was published in 2004. The author thoroughly researched and understood the history of this incredible textile artist for whom adapting became a way of life. Muriel Nezhnie Helfman is truly an inspiration, having achieved such weaving versatility with minimal instruction in weaving techniques. A prolific tapestry weaver with many commissions, her most noted works are the Holocaust Tapestries. How fortunate to have available such a candid biography of this accomplished artist.

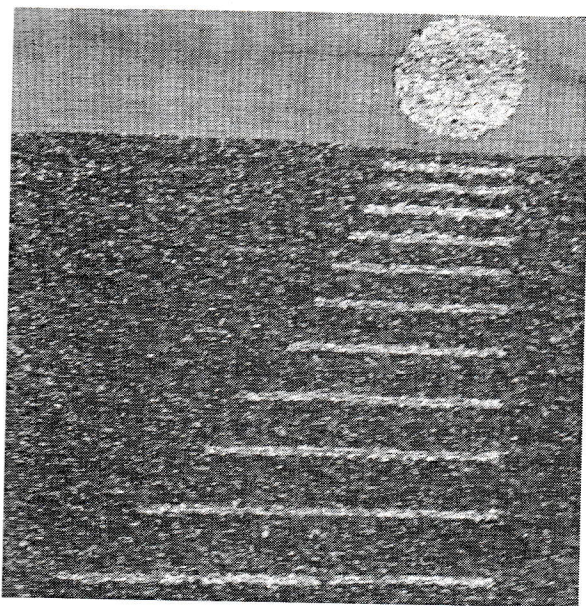
Inspirational / Instructional

The Making of Modern Tapestry by **Silvia Heyden**, published in 1998, is a wonderful exploration of a tapestry artist's pursuit of a concept. Sylvia wished to weave tapestry that need not be painted or designed on paper, but would evolve from the process of weaving itself. To that end, the chapters discuss technical weaving methods that contribute to sculptured weaving. The book is loaded with wonderful colored photographs of weavings and technical details. Of interest to me was the chapter with photos by Siegfried Heyden and an elaboration on his seven favorite works of his wife's extensive inventory. I found this book very helpful in my exploration of eccentric wefts.

The Textile Design Book by **Karin Jerstorp** and **Eva Kohlmark** was published in 1988 in the English translation. This is a wonderful support for helping to understand and create patterns using texture, shape and color. Creative textile design and originality for tapestry can be difficult for the beginning weaver, and for the rest of us! This book could help solve some of those design questions. A valuable color study section gives an in-depth overview. Lots of textile history is discussed, with wonderful illustrations, and colorful examples of design elements. This book has a special spot on my shelf.

Inspirational / Historical

Contemporary Textile Art SCANDINAVIA, by **Charles S. Talley** was published in 1982. This book is a gem. If you are the least bit curious about tapestries being produced in the Scandinavian (Nordic) countries and internationally, this is a must read. Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland make up the sections. They feature an historical overview of the textile development of each country, and include biographies of textile artists with an example of their work. At the end of each section is a colorful "gallery" of woven tapestries. This book can help a weaver to expand the possibilities.



Nicki Bair, "Moon Over Death Valley," 10" x 10", is one of a series of tapestries I did between 2005-2007 reflecting the concept that celestial navigation.

Inspirational / Instructional / Historical

No textile library would be complete without two books by **Anni Albers**, a textile teacher and artist who was among the primary forces in achieving recognition for weaving as an art form. *On Weaving*, published in 1965 and reprinted in 1993, is aimed at an audience of weavers and anyone touched by the textile environment. For example, chapters titled "Tactile Sensibility" and "Designing as Visual Organization" are the author's personal commentary on the "state of things" in the world as it relates to textiles. It is a wonderful read with many outstanding illustrations and textile plates. *Selected Writings on Design* was published in 2000. It comprises 15 essays taken from Anni's previous publications. Through these essays, the author "addresses the artistic and practical concerns of modern design and considers the ever changing role of the designer." Anni Albers is non-generational and her writings apply today.

Historical

The Woven Coverlets of Norway by **Katherine Larson** was published in 2001 in conjunction with the exhibition "Woven Treasure: The Coverlets of Norway," organized by the Nordic Heritage Museum in association with the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. The exhibit toured the states of Washington, North Dakota, and Vancouver, British Columbia. It is a beautiful book.

Tapestry: Mirror of History by **F.P. Thomson** and published in 1980 is the perfect book for the tapestry art historian, serving the interest of the general reader and the needs of the specialist. The author covers tapestry of all periods with wonderful pictures and explanations.

Tapestry by **Barty Phillips** was published in 1994 and reprinted in 2000. The opening pages are full color plates of the renowned Unicorn Tapestries. This beautifully presented book documents the history of tapestry from some of the oldest cultures to the present day. The chapter on Contemporary Tapestry is a source of inspiration to the artist and collector. Quite unique is the practical advice by the author on where to purchase old and new work, as well as guidelines on the maintenance and repair of tapestry. This is a magnificent book filled with many "textile illustrations, which reveal the texture, vivid color and beauty of tapestry".

In conclusion, it has been a pleasure to share my textile library of favorites with you. I encourage you to explore, as there are some excellent resources available to weavers today. To quote Theo Moorman, "we must train ourselves to select, from many possible lines of approach, the one that is right and fruitful for us, where our ideas can have a chance to grow strongly and naturally and where we can ourselves develop to our full stature as both artist and craftsmen"

Review of *Tapestry 101*

Kathe Todd-Hooker

published by Fine Fiber Press & Studio

Albany, Oregon, USA 2007 \$29.00

spiral bound paperback, 108 pages

By Pat Williams

Kathe Todd-Hooker invites us to use *Tapestry 101* as our own personal workshop. "Warp the loom, try the weaving techniques and finish off your first sample tapestry." Her writing style is personal and often funny.

The format of the book takes us from a discussion of what tapestry is to warping, weaving, finishing and finally to presenting a tapestry. The main approach is how she would teach the process rather than an attempt to make an exhaustive survey of every way to weave a tapestry. Obviously, her suggestions come from tried-and-true methods.

continued...

Kathe's casual and personal style of writing essentially led me to read the book straight through. It is a short book (108 pages), and moves right along. Resources for those luscious supplies are offered, along with a complete index. There is also a short bibliography, which seems to me to have left out at least two other somewhat current and quite good instructional books: Nancy Harvey's *Tapestry Weaving, A Comprehensive Study Guide*) and Carol K. Russell's *The Tapestry Handbook*.

I will be teaching a beginning tapestry class at Joseph C. Campbell School of Craft in North Carolina next spring, and *Tapestry 101* will be my suggested purchase for the course.

The Tapestry List

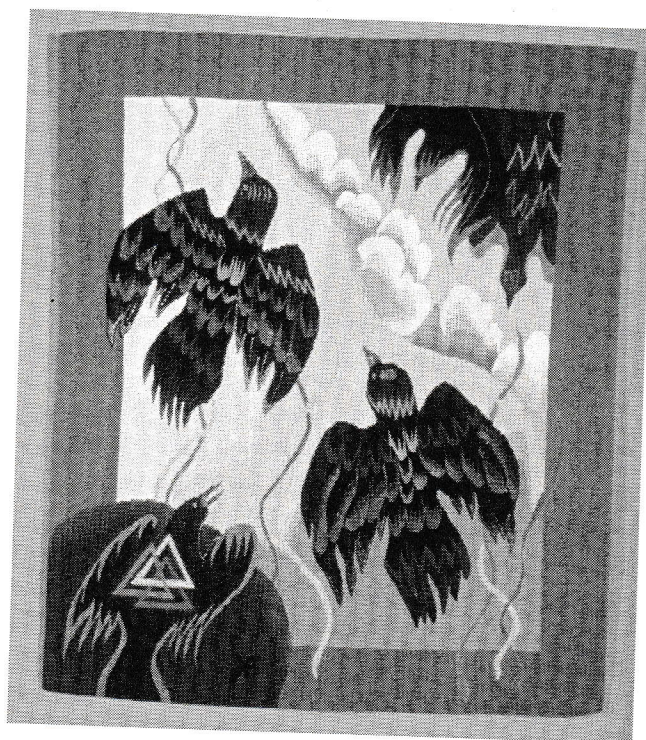
By Lany Eila

About 10 years ago, I traveled to New York and decided to see if I could find any contemporary tapestry while I was there. I had seen the "World Tapestry Today" exhibit at Convergence in Chicago, in 1988, and the tapestries at Weaving Southwest in Taos, New Mexico, so I knew that contemporary tapestry existed. In New York, I searched the Internet and the phone book. I went to museums and galleries and asked around. All I found were historical tapestries. When I asked for contemporary tapestries, I was directed to someone that carried contemporary reproductions of historical tapestries. A few years later, I chanced to meet Karen Benjamin and told her the story of my trip to New York. She gave me a copy of *Tapestry Topics* and Kathe Todd-Hooker's email address, saying, "You should get on the Tapestry List."

Kathe Todd-Hooker, fondly referred to as the "List Mom" was inspired to start the Tapestry List after meeting with other tapestry weavers at Convergence in 1996. She has said, "I was so lonely for other tapestry weavers to talk to." In the beginning, The List had a core membership of about 100. Currently, membership ranges between 250 and 350 people, with about 20% on vacation at any given time. Although English-speaking countries are most strongly represented, people from all over the world have joined, including many that are not interested in joining any formal tapestry organization. Subscribers receive the emails posted by members, either individually or in digests, or access the posts online. The number of daily postings typically ranges from zero to 10, and probably averages about 3 or 4. The List has been hosted on 3 different websites over the years. The current host, Yahoo, also allows members to post photos and articles at the host website.

And what do tapestry weavers talk about when the distance between us is shrunk from thousands of miles/kilometers to a hand's width? Much of the List discussion is practical, asking for and giving advice about looms, bobbins, yarns, warp/weft setts, weaving techniques, suppliers, the design of a studio, insurance, lighting, mounting, photographing and pricing tapestries. Some of the discussion is networking, letting each other know about classes, publications, items for sale, shows, new web sites and blogs, opportunities for entering exhibits, and the activities of regional groups. The list has also included many diverse and engaging discussions, about color, creative block, what is art, what is tapestry, the creative muse, jacquard, hands, faces, copyrights, teaching children, blogs, weaving in series, national variations in techniques (French, Polish, Norwegian, Swedish), and more. Travelers have been able to learn where to find contemporary and historic tapestry in many cities and countries. The international nature of the group has allowed people to find translations for non-English tapestry words. Occasionally we read sad news of illness or death of a tapestry weaver; more often we read of the happy completion of a tapestry.

One does not find much conflict posted on the List. Not knowing exactly who else is out there has created the



Kathy Perkins, "The Messengers." 40" x 33", 1999

continued...

need for posters to err on the side of graciousness. To maintain this decorum, Todd-Hooker does not allow harsh insults or discussion of politics. She reports that there have only been about 4 or 5 problem members in the 10 and a half years that she has been running the list. Most "flamers" behave themselves after a warning email from Todd-Hooker. "It's important that people are nice to each other," she says. As it is a private list, Todd-Hooker has the ability to remove members that misbehave or use the list to spam.

The graciousness and expertise of the List has been important to many members. "When I first signed up for the Tapestry List, I was blithely emailing back and forth assuming it was a list of others, such as myself, who were all learning to weave and helping each other," said Jeanne Bates. "I soon discovered that some of these patient and wonderful people were the elite of the tapestry world; Barbara Heller, Kathe Todd-Hooker... Pam Patrie, Christine Laffer, and Sarah Swett just to name a few. At first I was intimidated by the thought that I would dare ask for advice or have an opinion, but I soon learned that the list contained these and so many more very talented, helpful, and friendly folks. I've found workshops, websites (which I've since listed on my own site), tapestry shows, ATA, and many friends through the list. I'm very grateful for all the help and support I've gotten over the years."

Ann Hedland has agreed, saying, "Daily, I'm impressed with the range of tapestry weavers out there—their interests, abilities, experiences, questions and concerns. The Tapestry List has clearly become an important forum for weavers in North America and abroad... Personally, I feel that my office at the GFR Center for Tapestry Studies would be so much more isolated from workaday tapestry weavers and their issues and events if it weren't for the List."

The level of expertise on the list initially caused a problem. "When the list first began almost 11 years ago we had a terrible time with people borrowing, printing articles directly from the list, liberating, using it as teaching materials... [and] not crediting information to its source or asking permission of the writer," said Todd-Hooker. "Some people don't want what they write to be used by anyone. It's their right. Others could care less, but still they should have a choice." Todd-Hooker has copyrighted the List, although in practice she shares the copyright with the person that made the individual post. "I have NEVER (nor do I intend to) used anything from

the list without permission of the author of a given e-mail. I also have never been interested in how those who write a message to the list or send information use their own e-mails to the list. I have never enforced copyright unless I see things in use where the rights of the list members are being violated. People that try and do this get a nice polite letter from me informing them of the fact and asking them to not do it. A letter is usually enough to stop it. In the last almost 11 years I have done this about 15-16 times. Almost all of these were in the first 5-6 years of the list." Postings on the list have since been used in publications, for example in the Canadian Tapestry Network newsletter, but only with the permission of both the author and Todd-Hooker. Aside from exchanging information, the List and other forums have allowed the community of tapestry weavers to consider new possibilities for the medium. For Todd-Hooker, the expansion of avenues for tapestry weavers to communicate directly with one another is closely intertwined with the development of venues for small format tapestry. "There were so few venues for small format tapestry back then. Most of the major organizations ITNET and ATA wouldn't allow small format tapestry in their shows," she notes. "We weren't weaving a square yard or meter." The List supplemented other efforts to maintain interest in and support for the development of small format tapestry exhibits, and a growing number of venues have been created. In addition, ATA now allows small format tapestries in its Biennials. Other shows, such as the 911 Memorial Tapestry Exhibit, were organized via the List.

Todd-Hooker sees another result of the expanded communication between diverse tapestry weavers. "Almost every culture that has tapestry has a way of defining its uniqueness in design and technique," she points out. "Many of these [definitions, techniques and styles] are blurring because the internet, free exchange of ideas, readily available books, magazines, etc., allow us to be borrowers so that we can find the perfect technique or a solution for creating a specific tapestry design. Yet, we are still discerning enough to appreciate regional and tribal styles that are defined by specifics."

"Meanwhile," Hedland observes, as part of this expanded communication, the "Tapestry List membership grows; discussions rise and fall; topics come, go and return; and connections among weavers continue to prosper."

Persons who wish to join the list may contact Kathe Todd-Hooker at spider472@comcast.net.

Teaching Tapestry in North America

By Archie Brennan

I moved to North America in 1983 to work on small tapestries with no intention of doing any teaching, only to weave non-commissioned pieces. Prior to this move I had spent long months, even years, in many countries, such as France, Norway, Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Inuit Canada, Germany, Denmark and Mexico. Before traveling, I had given up my department where I taught tapestry, and my directorship at Dovecot Tapestry Workshop, in Edinburgh, Scotland. Although a fairly regular visitor to North America in the 1970s, I had only given one lecture in Philadelphia, and a couple of workshops of two weeks' duration in Eastern Canada. Occasionally, I came to collaborate with established U.S. painters on their already prepared tapestry designs.

Now I was looking for a quiet corner to devote my time entirely to designing, weaving and drawing. Only when asked, and to help my income, did I start teaching workshops and began to get a picture of the extent and nature of tapestry weaving here.

Slowly I formed an idea of the kind of contribution I could make that might have wider value. If we, Susan Martin Maffei and I, could teach essentially at a grass roots level, then a broad basic knowledge would be planted as a resource for the more established practitioners in North America who were around or would certainly come along. We have since been delighted to meet the emerging individuals who began at basics and are now producing quality tapestries, fully aware that they are every bit a product of the efforts of other colleagues and friends in Canada and the U.S.A. and above all the result of their own passion and commitment to the medium.

Taking a brief look at the broad history of tapestry in America, as I understand it, Navaho weaving has a long tradition of handing down skills to the extended family that have been fiercely maintained in order to preserve an important part of Navaho culture. As with Saltillo weaving from the Central Americas, short but fascinating workshops are available and whereas they offer their own unique approach they are more arguably linked with kilim weaving than the more graphic pictorial practice that is inherent in much woven tapestry, with its more varied technical issues.

Tapestry production workshops were established in northeastern U.S.A. in the 1890s, which were initially



Archie Brennan, "Madonna 2," 16" x 11", 2006 A reconstruction from a 14th cent wooden sculpture

staffed by European weavers who subsequently trained Americans. They operated for about 25 years but had to close, in part because of the great Depression, and the skills and practice disappeared. After World War II, an influx of weavers came from European centers, and a number of interested young Americans also went to Europe for various lengths of study and in time set up pockets of enthusiasts back home.

Perhaps factors like the sheer distance across this continent, which made regular interaction difficult, and also the relative affluence in North America in the sixties and seventies inhibited the ability to sustain production workshops that could compete with their European counterparts. At that time many tapestries were acquired from Europe. The San Francisco Workshop with Jean Pierre Larochette and New York's Scheuer Workshop with Ruth Scheuer were such promising attempts but ultimately became victims of this reality and were limited by the need to train apprentice weavers from scratch. When there is an absence of workshops, there is no ready source of former apprentices with a developed, sophisticated skill. Meanwhile with a certain irony, production workshops around the world have begun to recognize the need for a more involved, creative art component in their continued...

training whilst here talented, creative individuals recognize their need for more technical experience.

Parallel with the growing fiber art movement of individual enthusiasts who gathered in small groups to share and develop knowledge or to learn from various immigrants with diverse tapestry backgrounds, art schools set up some formal study classes for woven tapestry but again, with no opportunities of a market, such classes have virtually disappeared as the workshops did.

I am aware that I have given a simplified overview of tapestry in North America, but I see it as the background that brought about ATA, ITNET, TWINE, TAPS, TWS, TWW, etc, and many interested members from weavers' guilds all over this continent. Together this is where the future lies.

Susan and I have settled approaches about the techniques of making tapestry, and to this end we are in the final stages of preparing an instructive teaching DVD set. It is some 16 hours long - 8 two hour discs. It cannot replace the long hours of simple practice that are also necessary, but it covers basic to sophisticated skills with the ability to "pull out" sections as required. We expect it to be available later next year.

To finish, here is a group of principles that I hold dear.

There was once a good argument for weaving from the back but today in this world of artist weavers, as in the early centuries, to weave from behind is the surest way to become dependant on a reproductive, imitative involvement that stifles open creative thinking. Weaving from the front, particularly in the popular coarser warp set, can reveal the medium's own voice, and explore and exploit this unique language.

In every situation it is what you do not know rather than what you know that really matters.

Anyone who weaves tapestry pass by pass right across the tapestry cloth, like a cloth weaver, is nuts and deserves to be stuck with a bias of horizontal mark making and constant interlocking or looping. It is like filling a dozen wine bottles drop by drop, in line.

The act of sewing slits as you weave was hardly dealt with in the recent newsletter yet this technique makes strong joins and permits a high step freedom or linking even with single warp lines. It also provides an opportunity to focus and develop individual passages and to relate these to completed or new passages ahead to great advantage.

The consistent use of opposing sheds at adjoining shapes, besides improving surface control is a great asset for refined shape making. Given the healthy movement towards fewer ends per inch, this really brings out the intimate nature of tapestry to the viewer.

Be aware that the space between the warps is as critical as the number of warps per inch and their thickness.

Technical skills are absolutely necessary to learn, so that in time you can virtually forget them and focus on what they can do.

The horizontal [low] loom with its limited amount of weaving that can be seen at any time forces an unfortunate necessity of pre designing for the artist weaver.

I love the ordinariness that comes with long involvement in tapestry, and I am uncomfortable with the mystique of using French words in an English speaking country. Or should we use Chinese, Norwegian, Spanish, and Copt too for discussing works from such countries? God (or Le Bon Dieu) help us with Andean pieces.

And finally, one thing is for sure - Once you make up your mind about something, you must stick to it. On the other hand.....

After 20 Years, Reflections on Teaching

By Susan Martin Maffei

It is hard to believe that 20 years have gone by since I taught my first class in tapestry at the Scheuer Studio in NYC. At the time we (the Scheuer Studio) were looking for talented people that might be interested in an apprenticeship as well as educating the public as to what was involved in traditional French Gobelines tapestry making. In a way, I was picked up by Scheuer in a similar manner. I was recommended and mentored by my first tapestry teacher, Mary Lane, in a class at Parsons University. After finishing my studies that year with Jean Pierre Larochette and Yael Lurie and Michelle Mesnage, I went to work at the Studio as a commission weaver. We were teaching weaving from the back, with a mirror in the front, so you could occasionally check what you were doing and focusing on what we called "basic full and half low turns" and hachures. We gave the students a small section of an historical tapestry to weave. The classes were 1 or 2 weeks long, and we did manage to discover a couple of talented people who went on to be full time weavers in the studio.

In 1989, years after I had left Scheuer, I took a class from Archie and tried weaving from the front for the first time. By that time I had studied almost a full year at the Gobelins, had returned to the city, opened a studio on 23rd Street with a tapestry weaver from Austria, Ilona Pachler, and offered workshops in the traditional French manner. After the workshop with Archie, I quickly realized what an advantage it was for the creative process of an artist/weaver to be working from the front. I have never looked back.

Archie and I teamed up at the beginning of 1990 and have been teaching more or less as a team since then. We were fortunate to have traveled to many places around the world and discovered pockets of talented people everywhere, anxious to learn more about tapestry. Our workshops are essentially process driven. We have found, in a general sense, that most weavers need more technical skills and some drawing skills to be able to weave their ideas into cloth. More and more students are taking basic drawing classes, which helps to improve their observational skills greatly. We are trying to stimulate this interest by giving basic lessons in our longer classes. Most students forget that in the past the apprenticeship time for a professional weaver was somewhere in the 5 to 7 year range. Our average workshops are only a 3 - 5 day class, so they have a long journey ahead of them.

I often find the hardest thing to convey to students is the recognition and ability to make the link between the image and the cloth. We are so used to seeing "fine art" as our accepted form of cultural image making that it is difficult to make the shift, to understand that the way the image is created in cloth is determined by the limitations of the process. Imitation of paint, or pencil, is not necessarily conducive to the interest or beauty of the cloth. We should not forget that tapestry is cloth!

I regard slide lectures as an important informative aspect of teaching, where the student can see examples of ideas and methods, both historical and contemporary. We use this tool extensively in all of our classes.



A Brennan and Maffei Workshop in Nova Scotia

Of course the ideal situation for the student is long-term study. We are fortunate to have been based, since 1994, in New York City, which has easy access to a broad surrounding population and to have found a good number of talented people who are interested in the long journey of tapestry making. Except when traveling out of town to teach workshops, we have taught every Wednesday for

more than 14 years now. We still have two students, now more associates, from that very first Wednesday class who come on a regular basis to share their interests and concerns. The Wednesday Group numbers 13 at present and, as you probably know, they have been actively exhibiting as a group for the past few years, successful both in their interesting works and diversity. Recently we have started up a small Sunday group hopefully to continue in their footsteps.

We have found that there is great advantage to team teaching. It allows diverse approaches to problems. I have noticed over the years that there are basically two types of students. One is very visual and no matter what words or how you explain a process, they cannot absorb it. You need to demonstrate or draw it in picture form and then they can manage it. The other group is more conceptual and needs the words and usually lots of notes. Then they will go on to figure it out from that. Of course both groups need to practice, as techniques in particular need repetition, repetition, repetition. Optimally, with that repetition the visual and the conceptual will merge. Having two teachers giving different approaches allows a greater possibility of understanding and often can start a dialogue within the class, as there is neither one way to learn nor one way to achieve a particular effect. I believe this stimulates the students to think for themselves. We have had students come up with new ideas that work as well as the old ones we tend to lean on. In an ideal world we should be learning from them as well as they from us. I know that in a successful class they will be stimulated to exchange and learn more from one another than from the teachers.

Diminishing Distances by Joining Together

By Tommye Scanlin

ATA, as a group, serves an important function of creating a broad network for tapestry. Yet, getting together with other ATA members in person happens too infrequently to truly feed the need for face-to-face conversations and inspiration. Out of a desire for closer support and interaction, several regional groups have developed over the past years, and the need for new configurations continues.

This year, at the ATA Silver Anniversary celebration in San Jose, CA, Mary Lane led a networking session at which she invited representatives of regional groups to provide information for discussion. The galleries buzzed as people shared ideas. Whatever the size or degree of organization, the common denominator for tapestry groups is that connection between weavers is desired. (See more photos of the networking session at ATA's website.)

The Fall 2003 issue of *Tapestry Topics* (Vol. 29 No. 4) focused on several regional groups in the U.S. and Canada, including TAPIS (TAPestry Artists from Vancouver Island), TWiNE, (Tapestry Weavers in New England), TWS (Tapestry Weavers South), TWW (Tapestry Weavers West), and TAPS (Tapestry Artists of Puget Sound) a small group with juried membership located in the Seattle area. Two other regional groups not included in that issue are summarized here.

B.C. Stars (British Columbia Society of Tapestry Artists) is a non-profit society created in 1993 and is open to any resident of BC, to promote the art of tapestry through exhibitions, lectures, workshops, symposia, and other means. The group really only comes to together for projects, which can be suggested by any member. They put on an international symposium (Making a Place for Tapestry - 1993), organized and sponsored lectures and exhibitions and published two books: *Making a Place for Tapestry* (notes from the panel discussions at the symposium) and *Weaving Between the Lines: B.C. Tapestry on the Edge* about community tapestry projects and essays by members. Contact Barbara Heller at <bheller@telus.net> for more information.

The Canadian Tapestry Network is a volunteer effort dedicated to communication among tapestry weavers through a twice-yearly newsletter with documentation, promotion and advertising of individuals, activities and events related to woven tapestry. Subscription is



Networking at the Silver Anniversary Celebration in San Jose.

open to anyone, even non-Canadians. Co-editors are Madeleine Darling-Tung <cestmadeleine@cablelan.net> and Barbara Heller <bheller@telus.net>. Contact Barbara Heller, Fibre Arts Studio, 1610 Johnston St., Granville Island, Vancouver, BC V6H 3S2 Canada for information about subscribing to the newsletter. (\$20 Canadian for three issues, US \$22 for three issues, \$25 for overseas.)

Specialized Groups

Chicago Tapestry is made up of David L. Johnson, Lialia Kuchma, and Anne McGinn in the Chicago area. The three artists have exhibited together several times in recent years and "like the idea of exhibiting our work with artists from other media. Our idea is to demonstrate how tapestry enhances and is enhanced by work from other media and how tapestry can easily be incorporated into a contemporary art collection, public or private." As far as artistic development/enrichment provided by the group, they say: "The strongest opportunity our group provides is the support, respect and genuine pleasure we derive from each other's company. Our personal mini critiques are comfortable, companionable, productive and inspiring.... We are not looking for members at this time. If an artist comes into our lives who fits in with us that might change." The website for Chicago Tapestry is <www.chicagotapestry.com>.

Desert Tapestry Weavers is new this year; May 23, 2007 was the date of the announcement of the group's formation. The birth of this tapestry group evolved from the networking session at ATA's Silver Anniversary Celebration. DTW is described on their blog as "a forum for tapestry weavers living in the deserts of the world." Kathy Perkins, one of the founding members, says: "Our early goal is to begin the process of enriching all of our

members' lives by sharing our passion for the desert.... Our membership is just about as wide open as it comes. Anyone who lives in a desert, or has been deeply influenced by a desert is welcome." Contact Kathy Perkins, 7408 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87505

<TapKath@aol.com> or Lyn Hart, 3003 W. Camino Christy, Tucson, AZ 85742 <desertsonghart@msn.com> for more information or visit the website

<http://www.deserttapestryweavers.blogspot.com/> There is no membership fee required and one may view and comment on the blog without becoming a member.

Tapestry Study Groups

Marcy Fraker described their group in an article in the Winter 2006 TWS newsletter. She says of the De Soto Fiber Guild tapestry study group: "We started our tapestry study group in January, 2002, after our fiber guild...had its second tapestry workshop.... [and one of our members] announced that she had fallen in love with tapestry and wondered if we could start a tapestry study group." Five interested weavers began to meet on a monthly basis at an arts center in **Gadsden, AL**. Fraker continues, "At times we have felt like 'the blind leading the blind' with our tapestry weaving efforts. But, we enjoy getting together to share our mutual interest in ... weaving without the usual distractions of our daily lives." Since 2002, in addition to their monthly meetings, the AL group has invited several other tapestry teachers to Gadsden for workshops and visited tapestry exhibits together. Although only four or five regular members strong, several have begun to enter exhibits, and currently two are participating in the ATA Distance Learning program with two different mentors. (see info by Juanita Crowson)

From the **Seattle, WA** area, Joyce Hayes and Ellen Ramsey both replied to my Tapestry List query about the tapestry group in which they are involved. Hayes said: "A tapestry study group meets at my house every other month and has done so for possibly 9 years." Ramsey continues: "It is an offshoot of the Seattle Weavers Guild, but not all of us are members of SWG, and also not all tapestry weavers in SWG participate in our group....We are an eclectic group, so what exactly that we 'share' each meeting runs the gamut.... We do not 'study' tapestry in any organized way, but even our most seasoned members must still learn useful things from the sessions because they keep coming. I find I never know beforehand what it is that I will come away with, and it does provide an incentive to keep working when you see the wonderful things others are doing. It serves a purpose that a larger group could not pull off." Hayes concludes, "The group

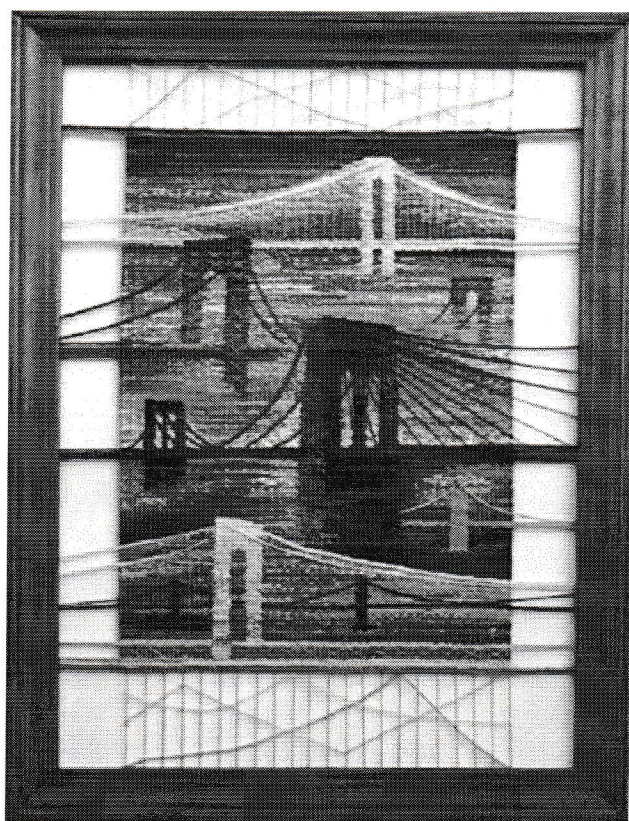
has been very stable and in my mind we have progressed and learned a lot from each other. The group offers us a safe place to do some experimenting and take risks."

Merna Strauch, TWW member from **Pacific Palisades, CA** replied, "My local weaving guild has a small tapestry study group (8 to 10 people), very informal, meeting twice a month. We have done a few challenge/collaboration projects, entered one in a local conference show and sent a group of pieces to the last small format show (in Grand Rapids, MI). Currently we are meeting at the home of a woman over 90. She and a couple of others only weave on our tapestry days. The group began a few years ago because one guild member wanted to learn."

Kathy Perkins, from **New Mexico**, answered: "There are three of us: Elizabeth Buckley, Lany Eila, and me [Perkins]... We three... were the organizers of the Jean Pierre Larochette, Yael Lurie, Philippe Playe workshop in Santa Fe... [and] felt a need for a more intimate group, hence we meet once every month or two in either Santa Fe or in Albuquerque.... Probably the most useful thing about the group is the ability to focus on each individual in a meaningful way. In a larger group things have a tendency to wander off topic. (We) seem to have a peaceful relationship with one another and therefore tend to take comments and criticisms in stride. We talk about everything tapestry: color, design, warp, weft, mood.... our discussions generally help bridge the gap between just looking at the loom and productively creating." Perkins also said that email plays a big role in their communication: "We never knew how important it was...until Lany's computer crashed and... was without for at least five or six weeks...It is hugely important as we chew over thoughts from our meetings to be able to go back and forth."

Pamela J. Davis, in **Minnesota**, mentioned that she is a member of a group that meets through the Weavers Guild of Minnesota, called the Scandinavian Weavers. "The Scan Weavers has several tapestry weavers. We used to have a Tapestry Study group...but the group flowed away.... I want to re-start the group and expand the interest in tapestry in the Twin-Cities area. To help jump start it...I am starting a free Tapestry Clinic at our Guild this fall." Beginning on September 4, Davis will be at the Weavers Guild of Minnesota from 4 to 7 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. She says, "All weaving levels welcome. Stop in anytime with technical or design questions about tapestry or to share your interest in the tapestry field."

continued...



Larissa Senatorova, "Across the Water Through the Bridges," 35" x 27" 1994. The connection between New York City areas through the bridges conveys communication, and contact points between land and water, and between each other as a people in life and work.

Terri Stewart, in **Sarasota FL**, provided information about T.A.O.S. (Tapestry Artists of Sarasota). This group formed in 1997 and now includes five members. According to Stewart: "We are not a study group, but saying that we do exhibitions only is not quite right either. We prefer to show our work as a group, but also encourage each person to show on her own if that is her wish." Several of the members also teach locally or nationally. Stewart continues, "We do not have dues or by-laws. We 'audition' prospective members to see if their level of expertise meshes with ours, as any shows we do as a group have the same general level of skill.... we do pass on to each other any little tips/trends in weaving that will help us improve our skills and imagery." In addition to meetings almost monthly Stewart says they also stay in touch via email and phone. "One of the biggest bonuses to this little group is that we continue to push each other to weave. Each...generally weaves 3-4 pieces per year ...[and] critique each other's work, in progress or on the drawing board), which is such a valuable tool." In addition to their group exhibitions, T.A.O.S. has completed one large commission for Temple Beth Shalom in Sarasota, which took at least two years

from initial design (by artist Art Sarlin) to completion of the five large panels, each 3' by 10'. Members of T.A.O.S. are currently actively preparing for Convergence in FL next summer. T.A.O.S. member, Becky Stevens, is a co-director for ATA.

In **Missouri**, a tapestry group of about ten members of the Weavers Guild of St. Louis began meeting in 1994. They have completed two joint tapestries, one, a triptych was donated to a Children's Rehabilitation Center and the most recent five unit tapestry will hang in a local library. Besides exhibiting individually, they have participated in the Small Format exhibits since the original "It's about Time" and wove postcards for the Arizona tribute in 2006, and also have given demonstrations and lectures. This summer they will have their first joint exhibit. Contact Janita Loder jloder@aol.com for information about their monthly meetings.

Note: This article has mentioned only regional groups and smaller, informal tapestry study or exhibition groups in the U.S and Canada. I'm sure many other groups are out there in the world, and I would encourage representatives to contact ATA with information about their group. Two of these with websites are **The British Tapestry Group**, formed in 2005 <<http://www.thebritish-tapestrygroup.co.uk/>>, and **European Tapestry Forum** founded in 2001 <http://www.tapestry.dk/>

Domaine de la lice

By Marika Szaraz

Due to the advent of the great tapestry workshops of France, such as the Gobelins workshop of the Gobelins family, or the ateliers of Aubusson started by Mary of Hungary and their export of great tapestry works abroad, Belgium gained a significant historic role in the ancestry of European tapestry. And, in-as-much as tapestry forms an important part of our national heritage, it also holds an integral place in Belgian modernity and our contemporary life.

An association, "Domaine de la lice," was instated in 1981, and currently brings together around forty tapestry artists living in Belgium. The group includes three categories: cartoon designers who create the cartoons for weavers or the main manufacturing ateliers in Belgium and France (Aubusson) to weave; tapestry weavers who only weave the tapestry cartoons in accordance with the cartoonist; and the largest number of members, creative tapestry weavers who fully create the project and materialize the weaving. In addition, the two tapestry manufac-

turing factories in Belgium are members of the association and support its activities.

The heart of the association is made up of two distinct councils. The artistic board considers all questions in the aesthetic field, such as setting up the jury for annual competitions and the selection of new members. The management board deals with administrative and financial matters.

In order to inform the public about the importance of creativity in tapestry, we regularly organize national exhibitions, presentations and guided tours. We also organize competitions with important prizes to encourage artists living in Belgium to research or simply form an interest in contemporary tapestry. We rotate the competitions between contemporary large-scale tapestries, miniature ones, and large tapestry designs/cartoons on a three year cycle.

This year, the organisers of the "Triennale de la Tapisserie de Tournai" have asked our group to help them with the preparations for the next event, to set up the regulations, and to be part of the jury. Previously, we have published postcards, two catalogues, a cd-rom and created an internet website, www.domainedelalice.be. Also, tapestry groups in other countries invite us to participate in their exhibitions.

At all times we respect our different opinions about tapestry, because our work is complementary and interdependent. In this way we acquire working energy and forge the unity of our group.

We have a cultural and historic heritage in a precious tradition. At present the artists of "Domaine de la Lice" continue to create their works in this field with enthusiasm, and in this way they preserve the know-how of this historic and original art, which is of such importance for the history and prestige of our country and our city. We want the people at large to discover the new "Brussels tapestry" renewed in a contemporary context adapted to our present life. For more information about "Domaine de la Lice" go to <http://www.domainedelalice.be/>

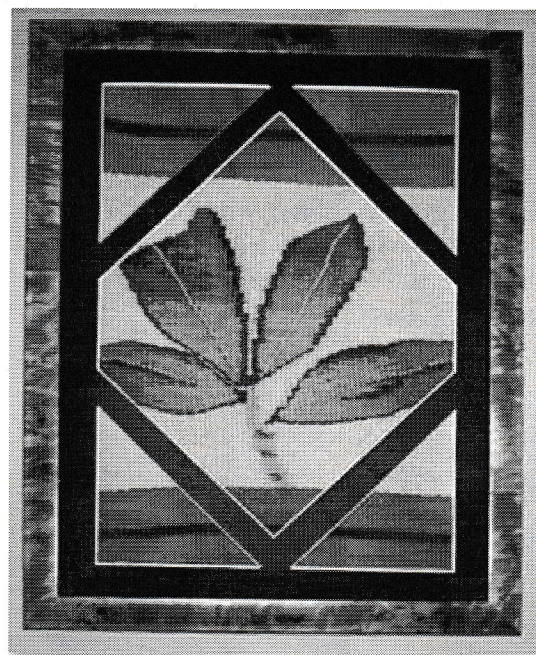
Distance Learning Participants

Juanita Crowson - Christine Laffer, mentor

I have no training in the creative arts. I started basket weaving to make gifts for a church bazaar. After a few years I found an article on forming vessels on a floor loom and decided that working with fabric and yarn was more interesting than baskets. Our fiber guild had a workshop in tapestry and from there I was hooked.

I am looking at life through eyes of a weaver and seeing more interest in nature. The hardest part for me is deciding on color to get the effect that I want because tapestry is best viewed from a distance. I do not have any difficulty finding the words to explain my problems to the mentor. Christine can spot every little detail that I have woven, good and bad. I am getting answers for what I need to know, and she has also explained other ways to do things that I can use in the future.

My excitement comes from seeing the finished piece, cutting it off the loom, getting a difficult section right, and knowing that I am learning and not just guessing at what to do. So far I do not see any ways to improve on a good program. I did not ask for a specific mentor but I am very pleased with whom I have.



Juanita Crowson, *Magnolia Leaves*, " 11" x 8"
2007. Framed with an eccentric matt

Cheryl Holbert - Barbara Heller, mentor

After the birth of my first child, 18 years ago, I remember feeling an overwhelming longing to "connect threads." The tasks of motherhood and a new move, however, filled all of my time. But the craving never left me.

Ten years, a second child, and another move later, I was blessed with the opportunity. Thor Carlson, a master painter and tapestry artist, who resided in Newport, NH, was willing to take me on as a student. Even without a

continued...

fine arts background, I found that my extensive experience in classical dance and choreography inspired my desire to weave. My first tapestries were essentially little "movement studies," flowing, wavy lines and colors that intertwined and danced with one another.

For a little while, I diverted from tapestry and tried my hand at multi-harness weaving. I wove my share of blankets, scarves, towels and a prayer shawl for my son. But I could not forget about those flowing waves that gave me yet another way of moving. So I signed up for a class with Claudia Chase of Mirrix and purchased one of her wonderful little looms. I dug out my old notes and samples from Thor, read books on the history and technique of tapestry, and began designing simple cartoons. As I studied the ideas and designs of the weavers in these books, I began exploring what my own style or "voice" in the medium might be.

Through my search, I came upon photos of two pieces that deeply affected me. Barbara Heller's "Conversation at Meggido" and "Passages," from her "Ghost" series, spoke to me in a way that no other tapestries had. Here was movement, born out of the profound stillness of stones! I yearned to have a conversation with this weaver about her work as I found myself reflecting upon stones and wanting to weave them. These tapestries amazingly portrayed the life, breath and memory they held.

A little over a year ago, after returning from a trip to Israel, where I was captivated by the seemingly limitless stones that filled the landscapes, I determined to learn how to weave them myself. I looked at the photographs again, hoping to glean enough from them to get started. To my astonishment a few days later, I received a mailing from the Fiber Art Center in Amherst, MA, announcing that "Conversation at Meggido," along with 11 others, would soon be on exhibit there.

I went to the exhibit and studied Barbara's work for hours, trying to absorb as much as I could to start "playing with stones" when I returned home. Then I got an idea. I had read about the Long Distance Learning Program on ATA's website and wondered if I could possibly request Barbara as a mentor. I was offered kind and enthusiastic help from the Alliance, and Barbara graciously agreed. We have been working together, across the continent from each other, since early last fall.

As I work independently, with Barbara's support via email and the occasional phone call, I am learning more than I could have possibly imagined. She has patiently walked me through every aspect of the design process, critiqued samples and photos of my work and

continues to offer invaluable and encouraging advice whenever I request it. Her generosity in the "weaver-to-weaver" relationship has stretched and challenged me, as well as inspired me to reach out to new tapestry weavers in my own area. I have already progressed beyond my personal goals and am exhilarated to finally be working on the full-sized piece.

I entered this program with the hopeful expectation of becoming more proficient as a tapestry weaver, but, even more so, of learning how to communicate an expression which reflects a moment or experience that is meaningful to me. This program has been extremely successful in helping me do so. Staying in touch with a mentor via email has allowed me to "journal" my way through the process - from the conception of an idea to its full execution - as well as to facilitate an ongoing dialogue of questions and answers essential to the learning process. The accountability of staying in touch with Barbara motivates me to make time in my busy life to return to the loom again and again. And my greatest surprise, and delight, has been to uncover a true weaver - one that I always admired in others, but lacked the confidence and tools to discover inside myself.

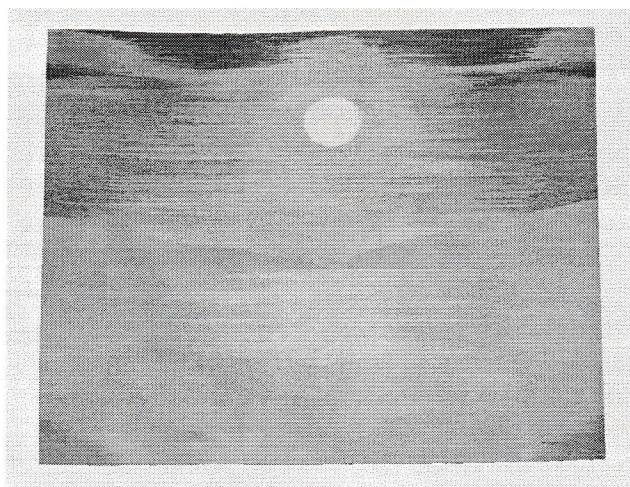
Ronda Karliukson --Michael Rohde, mentor

I am thirty-two. I began weaving seven years ago on a remote island where I was living a primitive lifestyle. Through the hand of Providence I visited a neighboring island where I met Reita, who taught me how to spin and to use natural dyes. When I manifested an interest in Navajo weaving, she gave me a how-to book. After returning to my island, I constructed a Navajo loom out of driftwood and began Navajo weaving. Later I built my own style of driftwood loom on which I wove many tapestries. My techniques became an eclectic blend of my own with the impress of the Navajo.

Through a series of personal tragedies that led me off the island, I ended up in the Kootenays, a rugged, inland mountainous area of British Columbia, Canada, where I am living today. At this time I was also beginning to feel the limitations of my work. I joined the local weaving guild, and an older lady taught me how to warp my first floor loom. Having access to the internet opened up a new world for me and was where I discovered ATA.

Being dedicated to weaving has meant not having resources to attend workshops. I spend much of my day weaving and for the most part I do not get paid for it. This has made it very difficult for me to make connections with weavers who I feel could sharpen my talents. For this reason the long distance education program has

been a valuable resource. I did not specifically ask for Michael Rohde. I was assigned to him. I was very zealous about my learning and scheduled once a week emails with him. I would ask a question on Monday, and he would have the week to answer me.



Ronda Karliukson, "Moon Reflections," 27" x 34", 2007.
Weft hand-dyed with nature's colors.

At first I was really interested in what Michael does and how he creates the very beautiful and sensational color gradations, and I thought I was going to learn that from him, but I did not. My work is landscape tapestry. The five years I spent on the island continues to define who I am and the weaving I do today. Through that experience I am very drawn to the natural world, its beauty, rhythm, and what it says about our God who created it. What I learned from Michael were the answers to questions I needed to know to continue to develop my own style, like how to make natural wool white. For me this is important because the moon is an integral part of my landscapes.

He also taught me things that I did not know needed improvement, like some aspects of my portfolio. This just came up as a result of our weekly interactions with each other. From the beginning of the year we had agreed to ask each other to clarify anything that was unclear. Only once or twice did either one of us have to ask the other to explain things differently. When the year was over Michael left the door open for me to stay in touch with him.

There was nothing hard about the distance learning for me. The questions and the weekly dedication were just as much a part of my week as buying groceries and putting gas in the truck. I am not sure I see any way to improve this particular program. I think it is fantastic. You will get out of it as much as you put into it. I think

if ATA could do anything else it would be to help younger, emerging weavers like myself find the buyers who are willing to invest in us.

Thank you Michael, for your time and commitment. Thank-you ATA for having the vision to create and carry forward the long distance education program.

Bill Saunders - Mary Lane, mentor

Mary Lane and I are nearing the end of my mentoring period. I decided to apply for a mentor simply to answer a multitude of questions that had accumulated over the years and to make a concerted effort (at minimal expense to me) to improve my overall tapestry technique.

Without great elaboration let me say my decision was one of my wisest. I gained confidence and greatly enjoyed every email contact with Mary, who turned out to be extremely knowledgeable and a fine teacher. Make no mistake, the mentoring program is a wonderful experience. I cannot believe (if I read you correctly) that there are currently only four in the program. It is a several thousand dollar value offered generously and should receive every support from all those interested in the future of tapestry weaving in America. Are there other organizations out there offering the same in other fields? If not, someone should alert proper educational authorities and let this program serve as a model in America.

ATB6 Artist

By Cecilia Blomberg

Before applying for the job to weave on a Unicorn Tapestry as part of the restoration project at Stirling Castle in Scotland, I had never heard of the castle and had only a vague notion about West Dean Tapestry Studio in England, where others in the series would be woven. King James IV had a Palace built in 1542 at the Castle to impress his new queen, Marie de Guise, and the courts of Europe. The Palace was done in the most opulent renaissance style using craftsmen from the Continent. According to inventories, a set of Unicorn tapestries was among the hundred tapestries that hung on its walls. They may have been similar to the set at the Cloisters as part of Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection in New York City.

The goal of the project is to recreate the glory of 1542 in the Palace. The tapestries are a very important part of the refurbishment and are paid for by private funds and public donations. Working in a castle sounded very exciting and to work on the recreation of the tapestries, which I had seen many, many years ago at The Cloisters, sounded like the ultimate challenge.

continued...

The timing turned out to be perfect: my husband was retiring, we had thoughts about escaping US politics and going to Europe for a while (or for good), our son was on his own and doing fine, and our dog had died the year before. The latest commission with Pacific Rim Tapestries and one I had recently woven for a college were finished. Although I was "on a roll," I could not pass up a chance like this. Besides, the advertised length of the position was just 8-10 months -- Well, during the phone interview I was asked if I could stay for two years and blurted out a yes!

I was motivated by the knowledge that this challenge would be tougher than anything I have ever done, and by the opportunity to learn something new, or old in this case. Having said yes to a two-year commitment may have helped my chances to get the job. West Dean prefers their weavers to stay at least two years, because it takes quite a while to understand the tapestries. There is definitely a visual language of 1495 that you need to absorb and internalize. You keep discovering new ways of weaving, and the longer you work, the more you find wonderfully quirky and ingenious details or color combinations.



Cecilia Blomberg, The cutting down event at Stirling Castle, with (left to right) Mieko Konaka, Louise Martin and me.

Here at the castle we work in front of the public, and we give a daily presentation about the project. It is really the ultimate educational opportunity since most of the visitors have no idea what tapestry is, and they are totally fascinated. Visitors come from all over the world, so we really have a chance to spread information beyond Scotland.

Records of the colors used were collected at The Cloisters by comparing the existing colors to the Pantone Coloring System. Each figure, plant, object etc. has been

listed and given color codes by part of the team (Caron Penney and Katharine Swailes from West Dean and Louise Martin from Stirling). Based on this color matching, the yarns are hand dyed by the team at West Dean using chemical dyes. They wove the first in the set and are currently working on the second one, estimated to be completed in May 2008.

When I started in early July, 2005, the tapestry had been on the loom since March of 2004. The other two weavers were the senior weaver, Louise Martin, and Hilary Green from Australia. The current team consists of Louise and Mieko Konaka and me. Rudi Richardson temporarily joined the team in early 2007 and will stay on after I leave. The cartoon, the same size as the final tapestry, was traced from a photo of the original reduced 10%. The reduction in size is to make the tapestries fit in the Queen's Presence Chambers in the Palace. The sett is 10 ends per inch (epi) or 4 ends per centimeter (epcm) compared to almost double that in the originals.

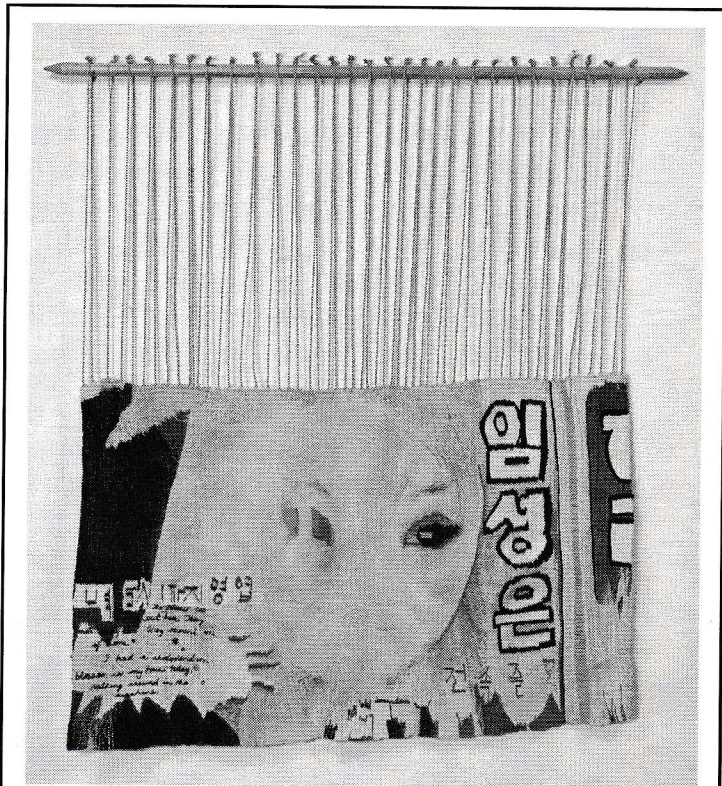
Besides the color records we also have the photograph of the original tapestry that we are currently working on mounted on the wall next to the loom. We print out the sections that we are working on so we can keep them on hand for reference as we work. If needed, we have both images of the fronts and backs of all the tapestries on disc. This comes in handy if a certain area seems to have lost some of its original color and it is hard to see what the intention was.

We mark on the warp by one person pressing the cartoon from the back, and we sometimes do tracings onto acetate from the original when we need more information or to make sure the final size of a detail is exact. Sometimes we will make a change to the cartoon by taping a paper copy of the acetate to the cartoon. In areas that have been repaired and patched in the original tapestries, we weave what may logically have been there. One example is in the lower right corner of the tapestry where there is an area patched with yellowish foliage, very different from the rest of the tapestry. This foliage covers the feet of the lord and the boy. So in the new version they have feet, in appropriate shoes copied from other figures, and the foliage is in keeping with the rest of the tapestry. We borrowed the designs of plants from either the same tapestry or another in the set. We weave these tapestries from the front and sideways. The piece that I have been involved with, "Unicorn Is Captured and Brought to the Castle," is woven from the left to the right. Others have been woven from the right. The loom is originally from the Dovecot in Edinburgh, trimmed down for this project. We sit on the old wooden boxes

Before I left for Asia, I chose to take only one suitcase. I realized if I wanted to continue weaving, I would have to bring a small frame loom and modest yarn supply. I considered it as a challenge to work with the limited size and materials. While living in Incheon, South Korea for thirteen months, I taught English as a second language to students from kindergarten to high school. I had no idea that it would be my students who would give me the stimulation to start weaving. The first series of tapestries was completed while I was in Korea. It was based on images my

kindergarten students were drawing. I was inspired by their simple shapes and imaginative subject matter. By the end of the year, I had woven twelve simple tapestries.

I spent much of my time exploring Korea by myself and with friends. It was with one friend in particular that I shared artistic inspiration in the concrete walls of buildings and alleyways we explored throughout Korean neighbourhoods. These walls were used to put up posters, advertisements, flyers, etc. Over time some posters faded, others peeled, new ones were added. The array of colour was fascinating. The amount of texture was splendid. But, it was not until much later that Jeff and I started discussing his collection of photographs. As we communicated the beauty found within small areas of the images and how something so mundane and unnoticed could be so visually appealing, I resolved to produce a series of tapestries upon my return to Canada. I would use abstractions from his photographs to produce tapestries reflecting my time in Korea. It occurred to me that there was a linear connection to the layering in the photographs and the layering of yarn in a tapestry.



Andrea Butler, "A Trace of What She Was," side 1, 35" x 42", ATB6 entry

While Jeff's photographs were an immediate response to his experience with the culture in Korea, I would be exploring the detached impressions the culture had left on me. So, the creating of "Cultural Walls" began.

From the beginning, even though they were flat, I considered the pieces three dimensional, intending them to be viewed from both sides and not hung against a wall. It was my experience with three-dimensional weaving that brought about thoughts of two-sided tapestries. It also led me to the concept of super-imposing photographic images on the tapestry surface. The images I chose to use were from photographs I had taken during my stay in Korea. I thought it was important to bring the process full-circle, starting with a photograph, and finishing with one.

After receiving a grant from the Province of New Brunswick, I took approximately a year to complete the eight tapestries for the "Cultural Walls" exhibition. During the year, I had to overcome obstacles of printing the photographic images and text on woven cloth and to resolve how to hang the body of work. The photographic negatives were sent out of province to be transposed for use as a screen printing image. I then shipped my screens to a different city to have

Channeling your Muse: Experimentation, Research, Innovation, Design

ATA's 2008 Educational Retreat

Tuck your muse in a beach bag and set sail for Tampa Bay to join talented tapestry artists Joan Baxter (www.joanbaxter.com) and Mary Zicafoose (www.maryzicafoose.com)! Dive into ATA's educational retreat and stuff your treasure chest of creativity with tools that will make your tapestries shine. Like hunting for buried gems, you will discover: strategies to identify, develop, and personalize design concepts and resources; skills and motivation to move beyond the initial design phase; formal tactics for concept expansion; image manipulation; dynamic use of color; and methods to catch and ride your wave of creativity.

Whether new, novice, or seasoned, all weavers will uncover pearls of wisdom during this tropical retreat! ATA's retreat will follow Convergence 2008 in Tampa Bay, from June 29 through July 1, 2008. Registration materials will be available by December 2008. Mark your calendars!

Member News: With Gratitude

By Ellen Ramsey

A loud "hurrah!" to our Circle Members! Circle membership dues include an additional donation to ATA programs. The following members joined or renewed at Circle level between January 1 and June 30, 2007:

Studio Circle: Nancy Archer, Traudi Bestler, Elizabeth Buckley, Odette Brabec, Mariola Cieslik, Martha Christian, Jane Daniels, Myra Dorman, Patricia Dunn, Su Egen, Lany Eila, Joan Griffin, Susan Hart Henegar, Kareemah Hasan-Rasheed, Lyn Hart, Silvia Heyden, Jane Hoffman, Peter Horn, Michael Jennrich, Barbara Jones, Ruth Jones, Mary Kester, Valerie Kirk, Lisa Kroll, Susan Lawson,

Carol Lennert, Ruth Manning, Margo MacDonald, Elizabeth Michel, Julia Mitchell, Inge Norgaard, Tea Okropiridze, Solveig Storvick Pollei, Suzanne Pretty, Christina Rasmussen, Michael Rohde, Kathryn Scott, Maria Estela Serafini, Melva Smith-Richman, Shelley Socolofsky, Kathy Spoering, Care Standley, Sarah Swett, Gail Temple, Doreen Trudel, Dorothea Van De Winkel, Beverly Weaver, Jackie Wollenberg, Mary Zicafoose.

Curator's Circle: Janet Austin, Helena Hernmarck, Urban Jupena, Joanne Park-Foley, Nancy Wohlenberg.

Kudos

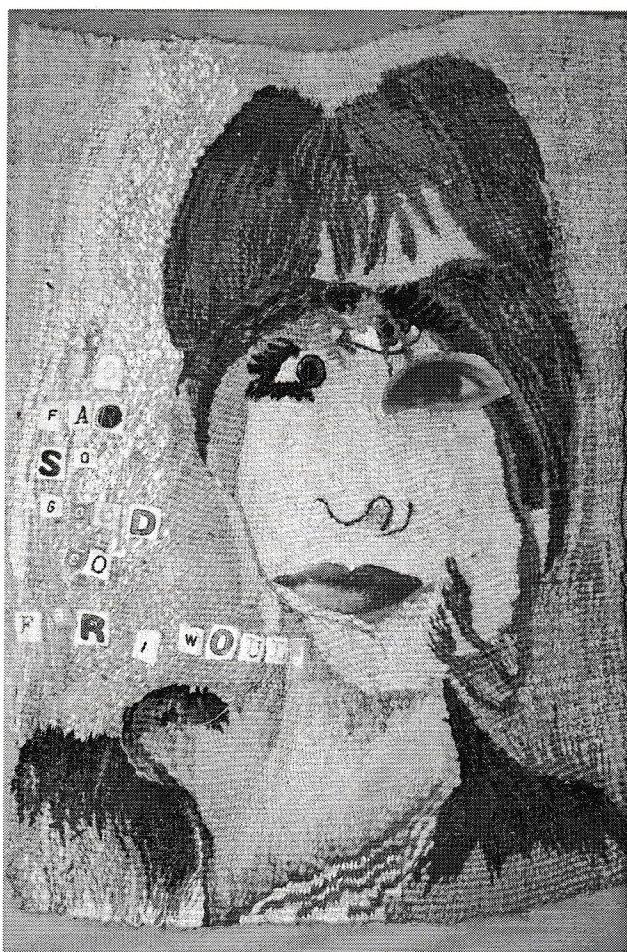
"Thank you to **Tommye Scanlin** for donating the one year membership she won with her recent ATA award to her student and workshop assistant, **Neville Harris**. What a generous way to introduce ATA to someone new! Welcome Neville!"

Three tapestries by **Gloria Mae Campbell** were selected by the Edmonds Art Council for display at the Frances Anderson Cultural Center, Edmonds, Washington, through the month of July, 2007.

Urban R. Jupena has been selected as one of six fiber artists to represent the United States at the 12th Triennial of Tapestry in Lodz Poland, May 20th to October 31, 2007.

Karen Crislip has a work accepted in the New Mexico Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts exhibition, **ORIGINALS 2007**, from September 25 through December 30, at The Harwood Museum of Art and the Millicent Rogers Museum. The opening and awards reception will be Friday, September 28th at both museums.

"Woven and Felted" - Work and Collections of **Micala Sidore** and **Beth Beede** on display from October 4 - November 3, 2007 at the New Hampshire Institute of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire.



Andrea Butler, "So Far," 9"x12", 2006: wool/ rayon chenille/ cotton/ linen/ heat transfer on silk/ thread.

Contact ATA

PO Box 28600 San Jose, CA 95159

www.american Tapestry Alliance.org

Director of Member Services

Becky Stevens stevensreb@gmail.com

Director of Resources

Linda Wallace yellowcedar@shaw.ca

Treasurer

Barb Richards barbrichards@airbits.com

Member Chair

Ellen Ramsey ew.ramsey@comcast.net

Education Committee: Distance Learning

Tommie Scanlin tapestry13@yahoo.com

Ed. Com. Coordinator, Events & Online study groups

Mary Lane marylane53@mac.com

Library Chair, Archives & Slide Registry

Joyce Hayes joyce.hayes@comcast.net

ATB7

Alex Friedman alexfriedmanata@gmail.com

Woven Gems Small Format Exhibition

Janet Haase haase@ufl.edu ATB7

PR Chair

Elaine Duncan eduncan@island.net

Volunteer Coordinator

Joan Griffin joan@joangriffintapestry.com

Web Editor

Christine Laffer claffer@christinelaffer.com

Webmistress

Jeanne Bates aBates@3-cities.com

Web Exhibits

David Johnson urbanwild@earthlink.net

Artist Pages

Michael Rohde mfrohde@mac.com

ATA MEMBERSHIP FORM

	1 year	2 years
Individual	\$35	\$65
Studio Circle	\$55	\$100
Curator's Circle	\$125	\$225
Collector's Circle	\$250	\$450
Student*	\$25	\$45

*enclose copy of current student identification card with payment

☐ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities

Send payment to: ATA Membership
c/o Barbara Richards
2160 Devil's Gulch Rd
Estes Park, CO 80517
(970) 577-9728

Name

Address

City State

Postal Code Country

Phone

Fax/Alternate phone

Email

Visa/Mastercard number

Exp. Date

card holder's signature

American Tapestry Alliance
PO Box 28600
San Jose, CA 95159-8600

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Seattle, WA
Permit #662



***** ALL FOR ADC 970

Linda Rees S1/P81
1507 Elkay Dr
Eugene, OR 97404-3070

Tapestry Topics

Guidelines for submitting articles to *Tapestry Topics*:

Next Deadline: October 1: **In a Wider Circle**
January 15: **Hand Dyed Yarn**, April 1, August 15

Send all items to: Linda Rees: lerees@comcast.net
--Or--
1507 Elkay Drive
Eugene, OR 97404 Phone: 541-338-8284

All photographs and electronic images should be accompanied by the following information: size, date completed, and photo credits.

Articles should be under 2000 words. Submissions will be edited for clarity and space requirements.

Exhibition reviews: We seek articles that describe the show with insight and critical observations. Describe the overall sense of the show and explain the parts that contribute to this sense.

Newsletter committee: Proofreader: Mary Colton, Layout: Elinor Steele, Distribution: Ellen Ramsey. Online excerpts: Lyn Hart, Web posting: Tea Okropiridze.

visit our website
www.americantapestryalliance.org



Jim Brown studies "Poisson" by Jean Lurçat at Christine Laffer's studio.